

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A cutting element as used in an electric shaver, manufactured from maraging or precipitation-hardenable stainless steel with a surface hardened by plasma nitriding, wherein the cutting element is hardened simultaneously by precipitationally hardening the stainless steel with the plasma nitriding on all surfaces of the cutting element to form a surface top layer of steel supersaturated with nitrogen and a diffusion layer adjoining the top layer with a hardness ranging from the hardness of the top layer to the hardness of the steel before ~~hardening by the plasma nitriding, wherein so that~~ the top layer has a substantially uniform hardness and the diffusion layer has a continuously decreasing hardness with depth of the diffusion layer, the continuously decreasing hardness of the diffusion layer continuously decreasing from an outer portion-~~portions~~ of the

diffusion layer toward a center of the diffusion layer and meeting at the center of the diffusion layer to form a minimum peak at the center, wherein a hardness at the center of the diffusion layer is an original hardness the stainless steel.

2. (Previously Presented) The cutting element as claimed in claim 1, wherein a thickness of the hardened supersaturated top layer ranges from 5 μm to 25 μm .

3. (Previously Presented) The cutting element according to claim 1, wherein a thickness of the diffusion layer ranges from 5 μm to 20 μm .

4. (Currently Amended) The cutting element according to claim 1, wherein the hardness of the hardened supersaturated top layer is at least 1300 HV and the original hardness at the center of the diffusion layer is 200HV.

5. (Currently Amended) The cutting element according to claim

1, wherein the cutting element is designed for use in a shaver of
~~the a~~ dry shaver type.

6. (Currently Amended) The cutting element according to claim
1, ~~characterized in that wherein~~ the cutting element is designed
for use in a shaver of the ~~an~~ additive shaver type.

7. (Currently Amended) An electric shaver comprising ~~at least~~
~~one of a~~ cutting element, the cutting element being hardened
simultaneously by precipitationally hardening a stainless steel
with plasma nitriding on all surfaces of the cutting element to
form a surface top layer of steel supersaturated with nitrogen and
a diffusion layer adjoining the top layer with a hardness ranging
from the hardness of the top layer to the hardness of the steel
~~before hardening by the plasma nitriding, wherein so that~~ the top
layer has a substantially uniform hardness and the diffusion layer
has a continuously decreasing hardness with depth of the diffusion
layer, the continuously decreasing hardness of the diffusion layer
continuously decreasing from ~~an outer portion~~ portions of the
diffusion layer toward a center of the diffusion layer and meeting

at the center of the diffusion layer to form a minimum peak at the center, wherein a hardness at the center of the diffusion layer is an original hardness the stainless steel.

Claims 8-9 (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) An electric shaver, comprising:

a stainless steel cutting element having a ~~plasma nitride~~ hardened layer on all surfaces of a blade, ~~wherein the hardened layer includes blade and being hardened simultaneously by~~ precipitationally hardening the stainless steel cutting element with plasma nitriding on the all surfaces of the cutting element to form a surface top layer of steel supersaturated with nitrogen and a diffusion layer adjoining the top layer with a hardness ranging from the hardness of the top layer to the hardness of the stainless steel before hardening, wherein hardening so that the top layer has a substantially uniform hardness and the diffusion layer has a continuously decreasing hardness with depth of the diffusion layer, the continuously decreasing hardness of the diffusion layer continuously decreasing from an outer portion- portions of the

diffusion layer toward a center of the diffusion layer and meeting at the center of the diffusion layer to form a minimum peak at the center, wherein a hardness at the center of the diffusion layer is an original hardness the stainless steel.

11. (Previously Presented) The electric shaver as claimed in claim 10, wherein a thickness of the hardened supersaturated top layer ranges from approximately 5 μm to approximately 25 μm .

12. (Previously Presented) The electric shaver as claimed in claim 10, wherein a thickness of the diffusion layer ranges from approximately 5 μm to approximately 20 μm .

13. (Currently Amended) The electric shaver as claimed in claim 10, wherein the hardness of the hardened supersaturated top layer is at least 1300 HV and the original hardness at the center of the diffusion layer is 200HV.

14. (Previously Presented) The electric shaver as claimed in

claim 10, wherein the shaver is a dry shaver.

15. (Previously Presented) The electric shaver as claimed in claim 10, wherein the shaver is an additive shaver.

16. (Previously Presented) The electric shaver as claimed in claim 10, wherein the shaver comprises a plurality of cutting elements.

17. (Currently Amended) A method comprising the acts of:
forming a cutting element from austenitic stainless steel; and
simultaneously hardening the cutting element at a same temperature by precipitationally hardening the austenitic stainless steel with plasma nitriding on the all surfaces of the cutting element
~~plasma nitriding the cutting element on all surfaces to a hardness of at least 1100 HV~~ to form a first layer having a substantially uniform hardness and a second layer having a continuously decreasing hardness with depth of the second layer, the continuously decreasing hardness of the second layer continuously decreasing from an outer portion ~~portions~~ of the

second layer toward a center of the second layer and meeting at the center of the diffusion layer to form a minimum peak at the center, wherein a hardness at the center of the diffusion layer is an original hardness the stainless steel.

Claims 18-24 (Canceled)

25.(New) The cutting element of claim 1, wherein the hardness of the hardened supersaturated surface top layer is at least six times the original hardness at the center of the diffusion layer.

26.(New) The electric shaver of claim 7, wherein the hardness of the hardened supersaturated surface top layer is at least six times the original hardness at the center of the diffusion layer.

27.(New) The electric shaver of claim 10, wherein the hardness of the hardened supersaturated surface top layer is at least six times the original hardness at the center of the diffusion layer.

28. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the simultaneously hardening is performed until a hardness of the first layer is at least six times the original hardness at the center of the second layer.